The Surrealist Deconstruction of Existence

A Visual Journey into Sermon 17 & The Cessation of Being

The Buddhist concept of Nibbana—specifically the ‘cessation of existence' (*bhava-nirodha*)—defies linear language. It is a paradox where earth, water, fire, and air find no footing.

Based on the analysis of Sermon 17, this presentation uses the visual language of surrealism to navigate the 'waking dream' of the proliferating mind and the ‘deathless element' that lies beneath it.

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The Waking Dream

We do not see the world as it is; we see a construction built by our own biases and mental proliferation. The mind runs after things with craving and runs away with aversion, constantly "building" a stressful reality. This is *papañca*—the tendency to overlay concept upon concept until the direct experience is lost.

"Sometimes... the practice sort of jumps into my waking dream experience."

— Katrina (Practitioner)

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The Wide-Angle Lens

The antidote to proliferation is a shift in visual logic: dropping the specific focus to inhabit a “panoramic visual organ.”

1. **Step Back:** Disengage from the specific object.
2. **Witness:** Adopt a “wide-angle lens" where subject and object collapse.
3. **Result:** “The notions of tree, branches, green are dropped… no object and hence no subject is invoked.” — Robert Heyworth

The Shift: From “looking at” (duality) to “seeing” (awareness).

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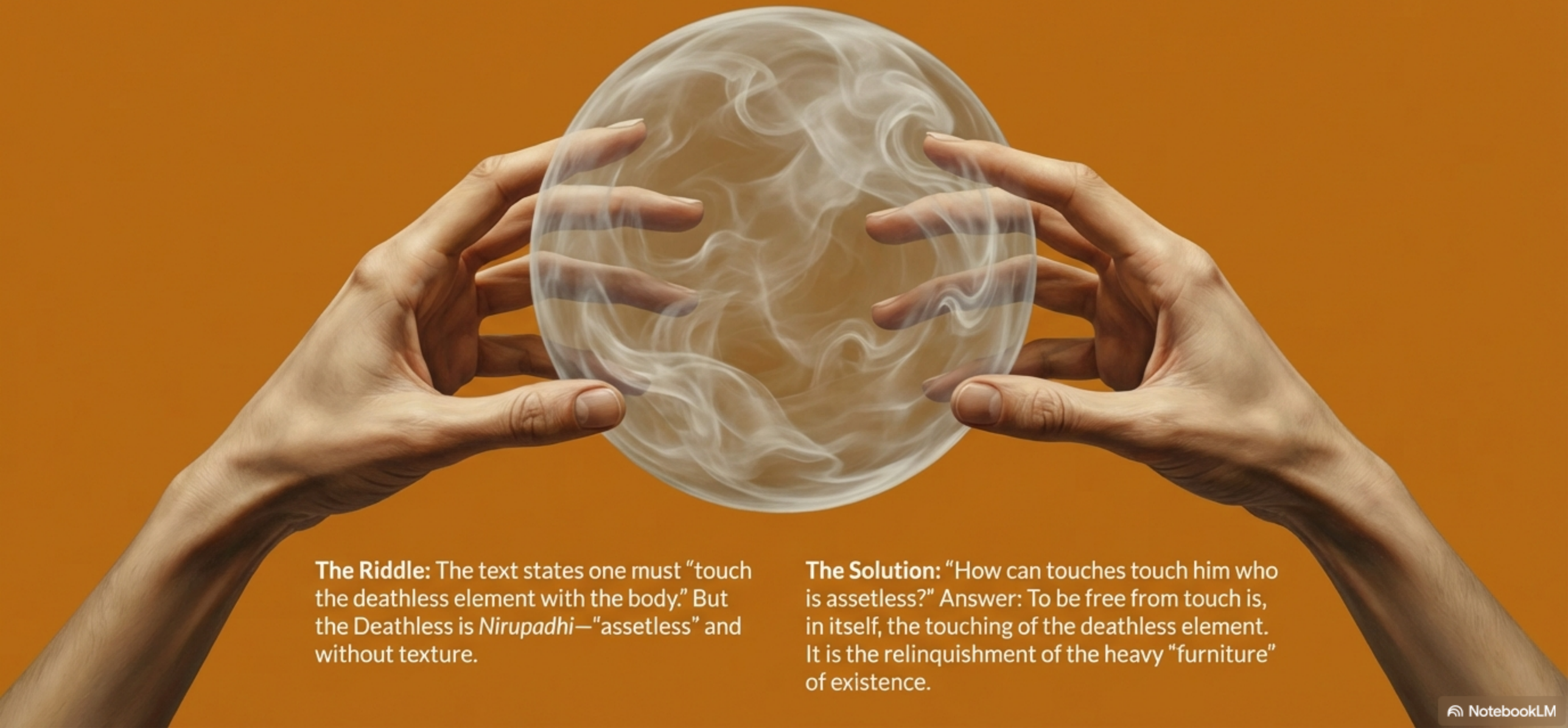
“Touching the Deathless” in Playfair Display



The Riddle: The text states one must “touch the deathless element with the body.” But the Deathless is *Nirupadhi*—“assetless” and without texture.

The Solution: “How can touches touch him who is assetless?” Answer: To be free from touch is, in itself, the touching of the deathless element. It is the relinquishment of the heavy “furniture” of existence.

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The Extinguishing Flame in Playfair Display

Bhava-nirodha nibbanam

“The cessation of existence is Nibbana.”

The Metaphor: Existence is a fire fueled by grasping (*upadana*). Nibbana is not a location; it it is the *event* of that fire going out.

The Twick Fire: Just as a fire burns frame-by-frame, existence is a rapid series of arisings and passings. The enlightened mind sees the “cessation aspect”—the gaps between the frames—and realizes the voidness of the flame.

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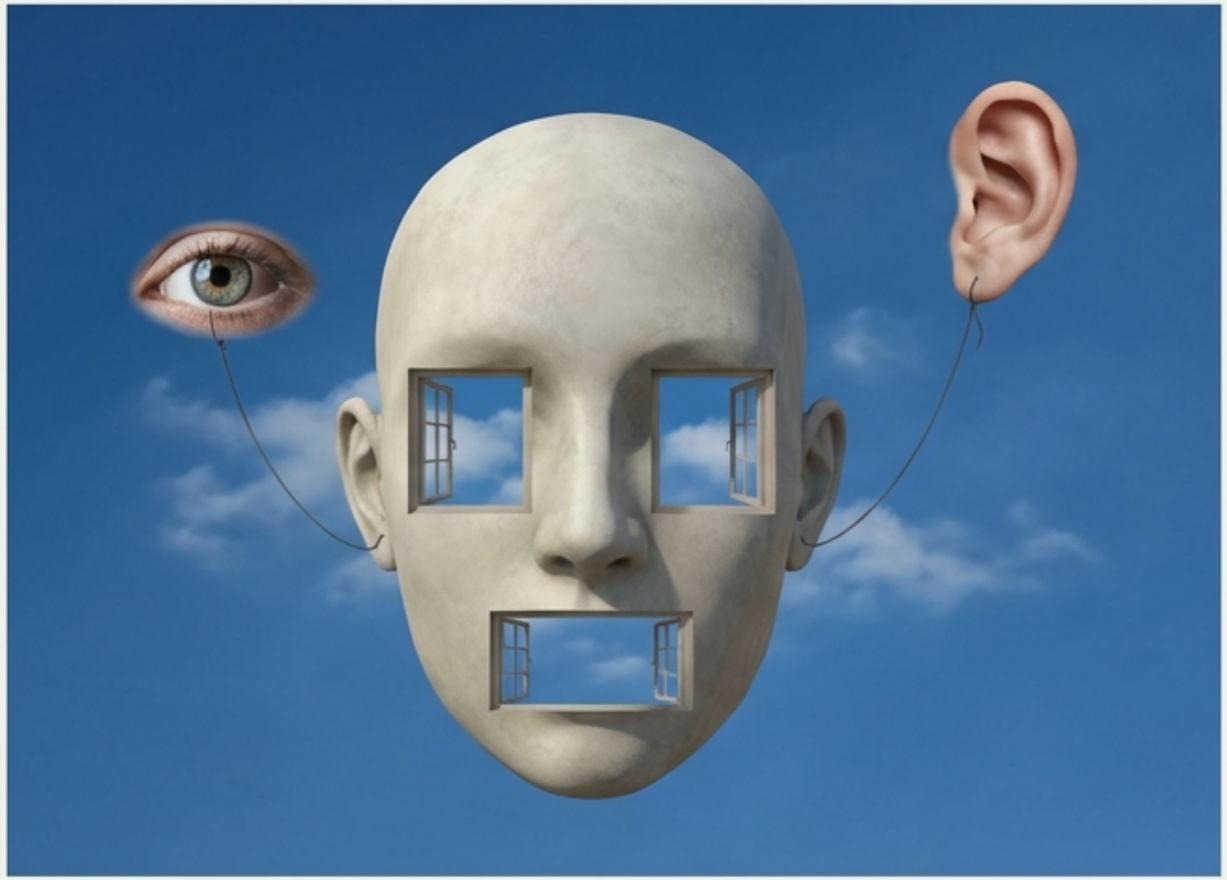
The Riddle of the Senses

"That sphere should be known where the eye ceases and perceptions of form fade away... where the ear ceases... where the mind ceases."

When the Buddha said this, the monks were baffled.
Is this unconsciousness?
Is it death?



It is Salayatana-nirodha—the cessation of the six sense bases.
But the Arahat (enlightened one) still sees and hears.
How?

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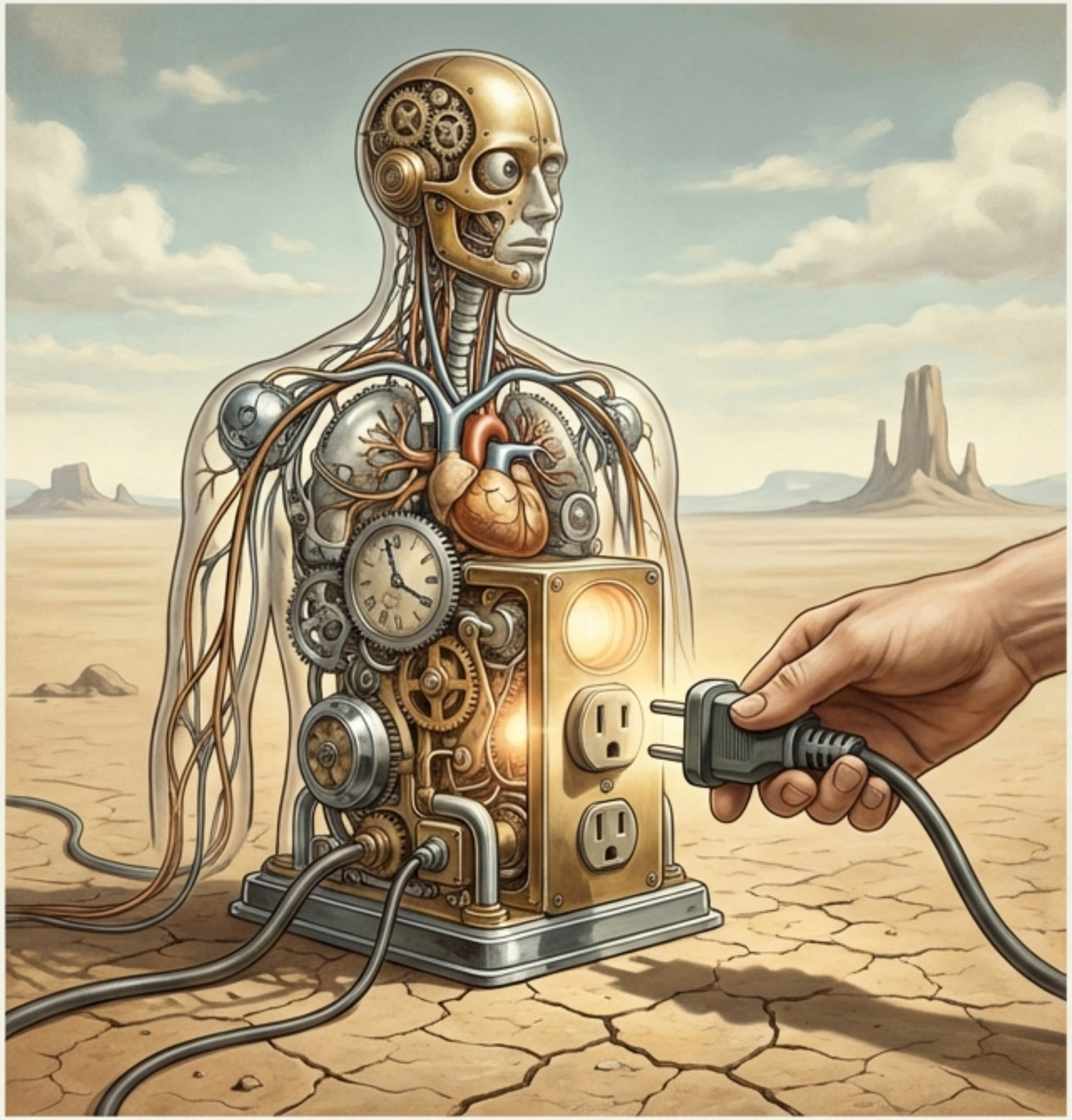

Disconnecting the Machine

The **eye** remains physically intact, and **forms are present.** However, the linkage—the lust and engagement—is severed.

Ordinary Experience: Eye + Form + Lust = ‘World’

Nibbana: Eye + Form - Lust = “Cessation of the Eye”

Concept:
This is the “Signless Deliverance” (animitta). The data comes in, but the mind takes no “sign” or “mark” from it.

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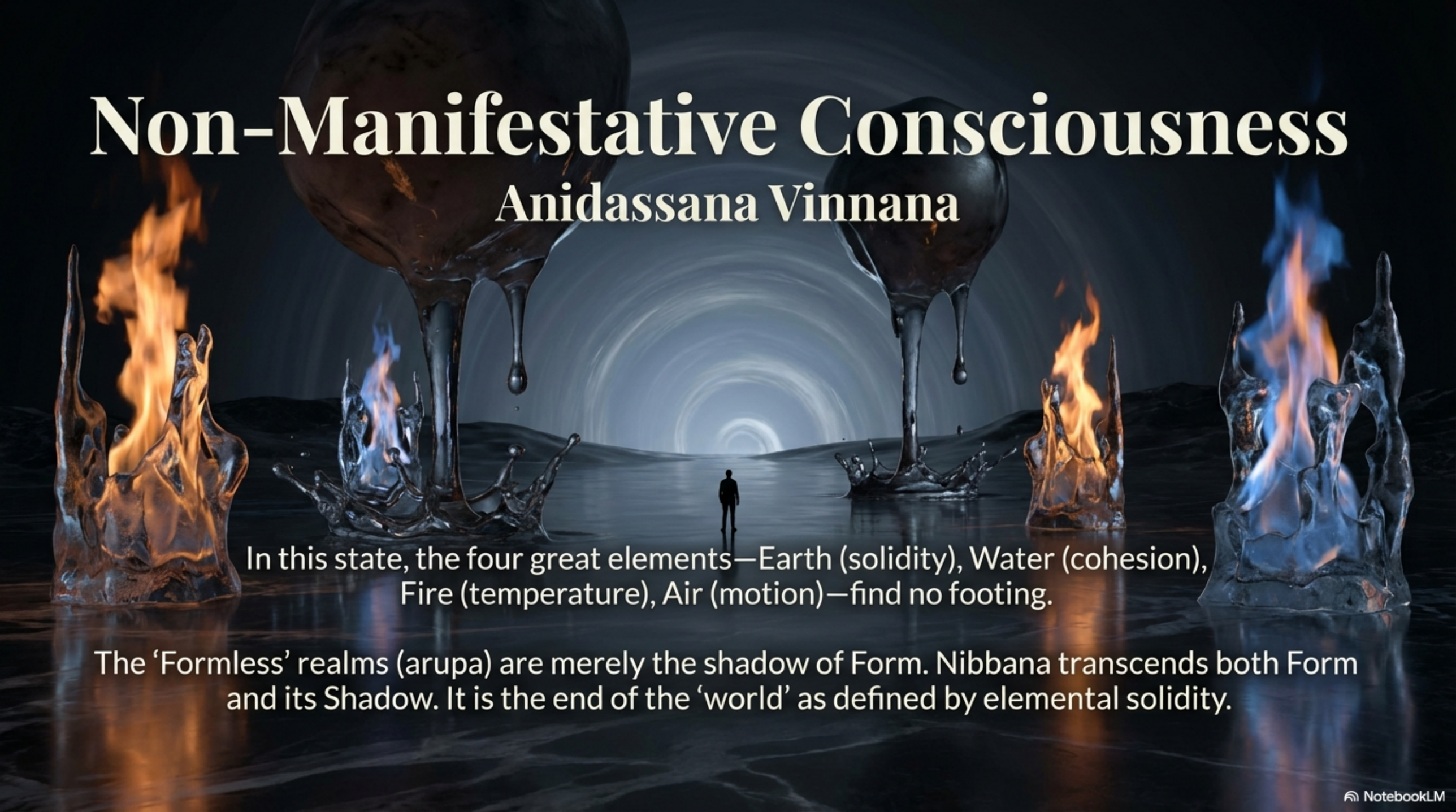
Non-Manifestative Consciousness

Anidassana Vinnana



In this state, the four great elements—Earth (solidity), Water (cohesion), Fire (temperature), Air (motion)—find no footing.

The ‘Formless’ realms (arupa) are merely the shadow of Form. Nibbana transcends both Form and its Shadow. It is the end of the ‘world’ as defined by elemental solidity.

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No Sun, No Moon

‘There is neither sun nor moon.’
This is not a description of a dark, underground cavern. The ‘lust of wisdom’ is so luminous that the physical sun and moon lose their luster and fade into insignificance.

It is a brilliance that does not rely on external sources.

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The Stationary Motion

‘Steady because of freedom.’

Forced Stillness:	True Stillness:
Holding a top still with your hand (Suppression). It **wobbles.**	A top **spinning at maximum velocity.** It appears perfectly still *because* of its speed.

The Arahat is not ‘suppressed’ or rigid. They are ‘contented because of steadiness.’ Their stability comes from the total freedom of their mind.

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Neither Here, Nor There

“No coming, no going, no staying.”

Not Established: The mind does not “land” on any object.

Not Continuing: It does not propagate into the future.

Objectless: It takes no support.

This lack of coordinates *is* the end of suffering. If you are nowhere, suffering cannot find you.

The Fruit of Knowledge (Añña)

The Breakthrough: This is the ‘cutting off of craving.’ The underlying tendency to conceive of ‘I’ and ‘Mine’ (*mana-anusaya*) is shattered.

The Shift: One moves from ‘seeking’ to ‘knowing.’ The search is over because the seeker has been seen through.

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The Arahat in the World

"Touching with the whole being."

If they have “crossed over,” do they come back? They eat, walk, and talk. The senses function. But they are “without influxes.” They experience the world without the sticky residue of “I-making” and “My-making.”

“The eye is there, forms are there… but the experience is different.”

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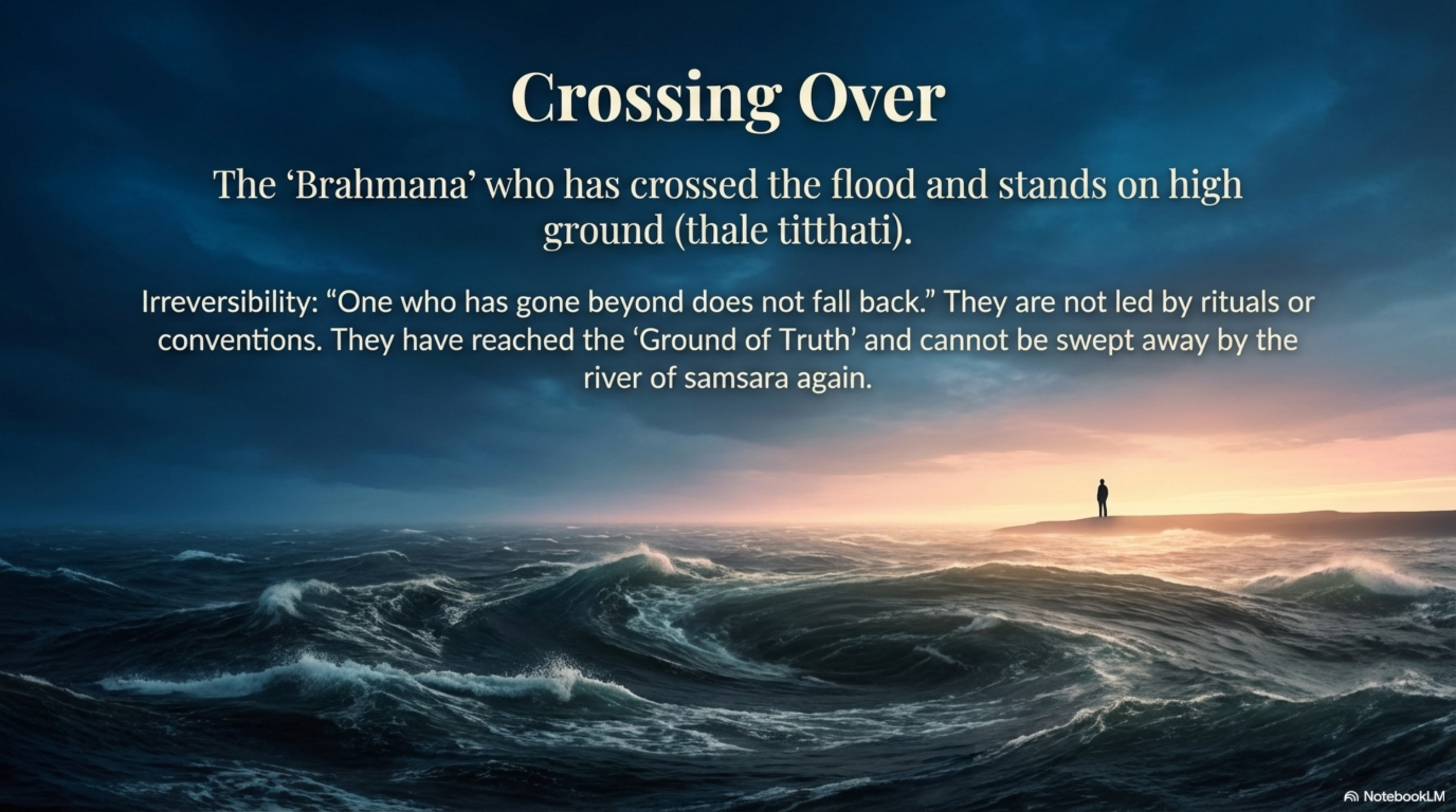
Crossing Over

The ‘Brahmana’ who has crossed the flood and stands on high ground (thale titthati).

Irreversibility: “One who has gone beyond does not fall back.” They are not led by rituals or conventions. They have reached the ‘Ground of Truth’ and cannot be swept away by the river of samsara again.



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Santam Etam Panitam

(‘This is Peaceful, This is Excellent.’)

The stilling of all preparations.
The relinquishment of all assets.
The destruction of craving.
Nirodha (Cessation). Nibbana.

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